

"Inflated Labor!"

Text: Ecclesiastes 5:9-20,
Text Verse: 9:16b

"And what profit hath he that hath labored for the wind?"

Jerome K. Jerome ^{an} ~~the~~ English humorist of the 19th century, wrote in one of his works entitled, "Three Men In A Boat," "I like work; it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours. I love to keep it by me: the idea of getting rid of it nearly breaks my heart."

There have been all sorts of comments made about labor & work. Suffice it to say, work is something that we do for a lifetime, and it is something that all of us share and cannot escape from. Today we speak of inflation and everyone knows what we are talking about. It seems that for most people their income does not stretch as far as their outgo. Inflation is not only in America, but it is worldwide. I heard on TV this past week that the country of Italy declared bankruptcy, and that the 4th bank in Germany ^{was} closed because of the money situation. Thus we can see that inflation is a very serious matter. But did you ever consider that there may be inflation in labor? Well, if we turn to the 5th chapter of Ecclesiastes, I think we can determine that this is perhaps so.

In the 9th vs of the 5th chapter of Ecclesiastes we read, (read). In other words the king is on the same level as the common man, because without the toil and labor and sweat of other people he cannot eat. He is dependent upon the produce of the field ~~as~~ just as his servants are. With all of his wealth and fortune he must depend upon the common things of life.

Vs. 10, The more we get the more we want. It is a proven fact and it is part of nature.

Vs. 11, The more we get the more we use, and we only see them for a short time and they are gone. We can only see them with our eyes.

~ Vs. 12, A man who does a good dayswork can lie down at night and drop off to sleep with little or no effort. The reasons being that he is 1, tired physically, and 2, he knows or has the satisfaction of knowing that he has

indulged in honest labor and his conscience is not going to bother him with guilt. The rich man in many instances cannot indulge himself in a good sound sleep. Too often he is bothered with insomnia because his stocks and bonds or his latest financial deal is on his mind.

Vs. 13, There is nothing wrong with having riches, the evil or the wrong is in amassing them and never using them for good.

(Illustration of Letourneau)

Vs. 14, The wealth of a rich man does him no good and cause him trouble if he tries to keep it for himself. He may have the joy of having a son, but often that son is only fit to waste the father's money.

Vs. 15, The way we came into the world is the way we are going out, with nothing.

Vs. 16, Solomon calls it a great evil to go out as we came in, but is it really evil? Perhaps what Solomon was expressing was the fact that there was only a hope of resurrection, thus it was a great loss to leave all behind at death. But you see, death is the great equalizer, for at death we are all the same. We are all reduced to the same commonness, king, or beggar, statesman, or laborer. We are just another human being in the sight of God and loved equally by Him. We are no longer kings or queens, or Presidents or Vice Presidents, we are merely Mr. or Mrs. or Miss.

Vs. 16b, What can we gain if all our labors have been filled with wind, or with inflated values? We pump air into tires, footballs, and basketballs, and labor can be pumped full of wind if it is merely something that is done because we must earn a living.

Vs. 17, A person living this way is filled with anger, sorrow and frustration.

Vs. 18, It is good to be able to enjoy the fruits of your labors because this is what God wants us to do. But this can only be the end result of our labors when we are doing what we should do, with what has been given to us.

Vs. 19, God blesses us with gifts and we are to use them properly. This is the gift of God.

Vs. 20, Life flies by so swiftly and quickly, and we can only remember a small fraction of it. But God answers us in the joys of our hearts. In other words, we know when we are doing what is right, because we have the sense of joy and satisfaction in our hearts.

This is exactly what Jesus was pointing out in the portion of Scripture we read this morning. He told of a rich man looking to his inflated wealth and how it did him ~~exactly~~ no good whatsoever, because someone else was able to enjoy it after he had died, and all of his efforts to amass it went for nought. He told how we can only wear one suit at a time, or eat one meal at a time, and to think of today, and forget about the worries of tomorrow. He closed His discourse with the words, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

How many of us here this morning are working at the job we feel is really the one that is best suited for us? I'll not ask you to raise your hands, but I'll ask you to think it over in your own minds. Have you ever considered that God has a special plan and a place of employment for each of His children? The way to find it is to seek His help ~~through~~ and guidance ^{and known} through prayer. I have worked with many men who are bitter and frustrated, merely because they insist upon staying in a certain field or occupation simply because the pension is ~~so~~ good, or some other benefits are so great. It is not a matter of liking the job, or being suited for it, it is a matter of fringe benefits. Employers across the country tell us the first question asked by most young men who apply for a job, is not, "What is expected of me?" But is instead, "Do I get a pension? How about hospitalization? How many weeks vacation do I get?"

When I speak of getting into the right job for you, I speak from experience if you will forgive my getting personal today. I am here this morning because I kept trying to answer God's call in my life. As I look back over it, I see that He placed me in different positions, merely to train me, and prepare me for the next one. Finally at the tender age of 40, when some people say life begins, and I agree that it does, I entered

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
 BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA
 THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SEPT. 1, 1974
 REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
 MRS. MARILYN STEPHENSON, ORGANIST
 MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
 CHRIS CAMPBELL, NANCY LINK - ACOULYTES

ORDER OF WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.

PRELUDE MUSIC: "DIALOGUE" MOZART
 "CONTENTMENT" GRIEG

SILENT PRAYER

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 131 "O MASTER WORKMAN OF THE RACE"

*ACSCRIPTION - CHORAL AMEN

*EXHORTATION

*CONFESSION (IN UNISON) "O GOD, WHO HAS GIVEN US THE POWER TO DISCERN GOOD FROM EVIL, HEAR US AS WE CONFESS OUR SINS. WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE FAILED THEE AND OURSELVES. REGARDLESS OF HOW GOOD WE HAVE BEEN, WE REALIZE THAT WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE KIND OF PERSON THAT YOU WANT US TO BE. SOMETIMES OUR BELIEF IN OUR OWN GOODNESS HAS PREVENTED US FROM SEEING OUR SINFULNESS. WE HAVE FELT THAT ACKNOWLEDGING YOU HAS MADE US BETTER THAN OTHERS. OPEN OUR EYES, O LORD, TO OUR HIDDEN SINS, AS WE MAKE A SINCERE AND HUMBLE CONFESSION IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. AMEN."

*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON - CHORAL AMEN

*PRAISE

*PASTOR: "O LORD OPEN OUR LIPS.

*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE

*DOXOLOGY No. 551

SCRIPTURE LESSON: LUKE 12: 16-34

HYMN No. 392 "JESUS, THOU DIVINE COMPANION"

*AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (APOSTLES' CREED)

*GLORIA PATRI

*CALL TO PRAYER

*PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

*PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

*PASTOR: LET US PRAY.

*PRAYER AND PRAYER RESPONSE

*OFFERING

OFF. PRY: "COME, HOLY SPIRIT, HEAVENLY DOVE" RODGERS

SOLO: "IN THE IMAGE OF GOD" PETERSON - VON MALONEY

SERMON: "INFLATED LABOR!"

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 355 "GOD, LABOR ON!"

*BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN

ORGAN POSTLUDE: "A HYMN OF PEACE" PRICE

*CONGREGATION STANDING - - - - -
 THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY THE FIDELITY BIBLE CLASS TO THE "GLORY OF GOD".

SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: *ALLEN BOTACCHI, JOHN REGMAN, DAN BOSKO, ROBERT KNAUER, CHARLES PENAR. DEACON ALLEN BOTACCHI WILL REPRESENT COUNCIL AT THE DOOR THIS MORNING.

NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED TODAY BY: SHARON STAUFFER, LAUREL STAUFFER, DEBBIE MCBRIDE.

THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY WAS 183.

THE PASTOR'S CLASS FOR CONFIRMATION WILL BEGIN DURING THE SUNDAY SCHOOL HOUR ON SEPT. 8TH - 9:45. THE CLASS WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY ONLY AND WILL BE FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS WITH CONFIRMATION TAKING PLACE ON PALM SUNDAY OF THE SECOND YEAR.

THURS - SEPT. 5 - 6:30 P.M. 17/76 FUND DINNER - NO CHARGE FOR DINNER, BUT A FREE-WILL OFFERING WILL BE TAKEN. WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AT LEAST FIVE (5) COUNCIL MEMBERS THERE.

SAT. SEPT. 14 - 8:00 P.M. - DAN SCHALL, NOTED BUTLER AREA GOSPEL SINGER, TOGETHER WITH THE CLAIR HALSTEAD MEN'S CHOIR WILL PRESENT A RELIGIOUS CONCERT AT BUTLER HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE BENEFIT OF BUTLER CO. BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL CYSTIC FIBROSIS RESEARCH FOUNDATION. TICKETS ARE \$3.00 AND CAN BE OBTAINED AT TRADER'S MUSIC STORE, MAIL - LYNN BEATTY (898-0958); ANNETTE BASSFORD (283-0958); OR AT DOOR.

WEDNESDAY - 7:30 - CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

THURSDAY - THE NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED - PLEASE HAVE MATERIAL IN BY WEDNESDAY.

CONGREGATION DINNER - (FOR SENIOR CHRISTIANS AND ALL OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION) - KEEP IN MIND SEPT. 22 - 5:30 P.M.

HOLY COMMUNION WILL BE THE FIRST SUNDAY IN OCTOBER.

COUNCIL MEMBERS - SHORT MEETING AFTER WORSHIP TODAY.

MEETING IN THE UNDERCROFT.

WELCOME VISITORS - WELCOME MARILYN STEPHENSON
 TALK ABOUT S.S. - MARY PATRICK - HOPE

"Inflated Labor!"

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"What profit hath he that hath labored for the wind?"

Jerome K. Jerome 19C humorist wrote: in 3 men in boat, "I like work; it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours. I love to keep it by me: the idea of getting rid of it nearly breaks my heart."

There been all sorts comments bout labor/work.

Suffice 2 say, W we all do # lifetime, & cannot escape it.

2day we speak inflation & everyone knows what we talk about.

Seems 4 most peop their income no stretch far as outgo.

Inflation worldwide.

Herd news past weeks, Italy bankrupt, this week

4th major bank Germany forced close

Thus inflation serious matter.

But did U ever consider inflation in labor?

Tu n 5th chap Ecclesiastes, & perhaps see this so.

Vs. 9, king same as we. Same level common man, must

depend on others who sweat & toil in order to eat.

With all wealth he still depend common things life.

vs. 10, More we get, more we want. Proven fact & part of nature.

vs. 11, More we get, more we use, & we only see them 4 short time & they gone. Only see them with eyes.

vs. 12, Man who do good day work no problem sleeping. A h man have insomnia because maybe ill-gotten gain. Worried bout stocks, bonds, financial deals.

Vs. 13, Nothing wrong have riches, evil in amassing & never using for good (Illustration LeTourneau)

vs. 14, Wealth of richman does him no good & cause trouble if he keep for self. May have joy of son, but often son only fit waste dad's money.

vs. 15, Way we came in world, go out same way.

vs 16a, Solomon calls evil go out as came in. But is it evil? He perhaps express fact they only hope resurr. & thus great loss leave all behind. But death great equalizer & we all reduced to sameness. No longer rank or royalty, all children of God called home.

vs. 16b, What can we gain if labor filled with wind? Or we work for inflated values? 2/

vs. 17, Person who live this way filled, anger, sorrow, frustration

vs. 18, It good 2 enjoy fruits of labors, this what God wants for us. But this only end result when we do nat should do with what given to us.

vs. 19, God blesses us with gifts & wecto use properly. This is gift of God.

vs. 20, Life flies by so quickly, & we only remember fraction of it. But God answers in the joy of our hearts. In other words, we know when we are doing what is right because we have sense of joy & satisfaction in our hearts.

This what Js poin out in Scrip # this morn.

He told rich man & inflated labor & wealth

Told how this did him no good, cause he had leave all behind.

Told how can only wear 1 suit at time, eat 1 meal,

Told 2 think of 2day & not worry bout tomorrow,

He close discourse, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

How many us here this morn, work at job we feel reall 1 best suited for us?

Will not ask show of hands,

I'll just ask think over in minds.

Have U ever considered God has special plan & place employment 4 each His children?

Way to find is 2 seek His help & guid thru prayer

I worked with, known many men bitter frustrated simply because work at job cause pension/ other ~~many~~ benefits.

Employers cross country tell young men ask 1st,

not what expected of me,

but, "Do I get pension? How bout hospit? Vacation?"

When I speak get in job right 4 U, I speak experience if U forgive getting personal this morn.

I here cause I kept asking God show me way.

He led me different places of employ.

Each 1 training ground 4 next step.

Finally tender age 40, some say life begin, & I agree), I entered Seminary.

1st time in life, square peg, square hole, or round peg, round hole.

God finally placed me where He wanted me.

He can do same 4 U

3/

If U dissatisfied work or occupation, don't hang on
cause inflated values/ finge benefits,
ace problem in hands of God.

I do not advocate all go work on Tuesday say "I quit,"
I advocate instead U look at self & employment in
n/ & honest way.

Ask~self, "Am I here because God really wants me here?
Or am I here because I can make the most money even
if I have to trade my pride, my dignity, and my
Christianity to be here?"

We need come God talk Him just as would talk old frier
We need tell Him how we feel about job, how we want
be where he wants us 2 be.

Continue at job, continue pray about it.

He may send another job offer.

He may tell you stay where U are,

He may want U move another part of company.

But U must open your life & hart to God, & let His
Holy Spirit work in U

(Illustration of Chinese woman & how she prayed)

Perhaps we each need look anew at daily life & labors

We have inflated labor to extent we lost sight of
commonplace in life.

We need think more of simple things of life & seek
as Js tried teach us, "To place treasure where
heart is"

If do this we strive lay up treasure in hvn, & strive
less lay up treasure on earth where moths consume,
& rust destroys.

Soromon had it right when he said,

"And what profit hath he that hath labored for the
wind?"

May this not be said of us, but instead, "We seek
the kingdom of God" and let Him add the proper things
to our lives."

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)



SEP 56







Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.